

## REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Examiner's rejections will be considered in the order of their occurrence in the Office Action.

### Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Office Action:

Claims 1-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hayes in view of Hempel.

Claim 1, particularly as amended, requires "said containers being detachably attached to one another to form a combined collective container structure having a cylindrical exterior shape." Applicant's requirements of the containers being attached together to form a cylindrical exterior shape permits the user to reduce the amount of space needed to store items within the containers. further, this cylindrical shape prevents the contents of the containers being subjected to excessive heat transfer, and prevents one section of the container having a great change in temperature, as with a rectangular section, where the end containers would not even come into contact with each other. Further, the lids claimed by applicant, as set forth in claims 10 through 15, provide the user with a variety of different storage methods so that as the contents of the containers are used and fewer containers are used, smaller lids may be used to reduce the space required to store the containers.

The Hayes reference teaches a trash cart and bin assembly that has a tubular metal frame 11 that holds a plurality of trash bins 35 upon it. Hayes further teaches a lid 18 that fits over the tops of the four trash bins (See Fig. 2). Hayes also teaches an individual bin lid 37 that can be placed on the top of one of the bins. Hayes does not teach applicant's requirements of the individual bins being able to connect to each other without the use of an exterior frame nor does it show or suggest applicant's requirements (as described in

claims 10 -15) of a plurality of different sized lids to accommodate not only the entire collection of containers and one individual container, but also a combination of the containers.

The Hempel reference teaches an interconnected detachable boxes that are connected by notched cutouts 14 and 16. Hempel does not show or suggest, however, applicant's requirements of the combination of containers and lids for permitting the user to have the maximum storage possibilities available while using the containers.

Neither of the references, alone or in combination, show or suggest applicant's requirements of the combination of cylindrically shaped containers and lids for covering many combinations of containers from a partial cylinder shape to a complete cylinder.

Withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of claims 1-15 is therefore respectfully requested.

**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE:**

**In the Claims** (bracketed parts deleted and underline parts added):

1. (Amended) A separable container apparatus comprising:  
containers each having an open top, a bottom wall, and a  
peripheral side wall assembly securely attached to and extending  
upwardly from said bottom wall, said containers being detachably  
connected to one another to essentially form a single structure  
having a plurality of storage compartments; [and]  
lids being removably attached to any combination of attached  
said containers[.]; and  
said containers being detachably attached to one another to  
form a combined collective container structure having a cylindrical  
exterior shape.

2. (Pending) A separable container apparatus as described in  
claim 1, wherein said peripheral side wall assembly of each said  
container includes a first side wall, a second side wall, and a third  
side wall, each of said first and second side walls having a top edge  
and a bottom edge.

3. (Pending) A separable container apparatus as described in  
claim 2, wherein said first and second side walls of one of said  
containers are detachably attached to said first and second side  
walls of the others of said containers.

4. (Amended) A separable container apparatus as described in  
claim [3] 2, wherein said first side wall of one said container is  
detachably attached to said second side wall of another said  
container.

5. (Amended) A separable container apparatus as described in claim [4] 2, wherein each of said containers includes an elongate first flange member securely attached to an exterior of said first side wall and extending along a length of said top edge thereof, and also includes a first recessed portion disposed in said first side wall and extending along a length of said bottom edge thereof, and further includes a first slot disposed in said first recessed portion and extending the length of said bottom edge.

6. (Pending) A separable container apparatus as described in claim 5, wherein each said elongate first flange member includes a first portion extending outwardly generally perpendicular of a respective said first side wall, and also includes a second portion being integrally attached to said first portion and being angled relative to said first portion and being disposed downwardly.

7. (Amended) A separable container apparatus as described in claim [6] 2, wherein each of said containers further includes a second slot disposed in an exterior of said second wall and extending along a length of said top edge thereof and being adapted to receive said first flange member of another said container, and also includes an elongate second flange member being securely attached to an exterior of said second side wall and extending outwardly and along a length of said bottom edge thereof and being adapted to be received in said first recessed portion and said first slot of another said container.

8. (Pending) A separable container apparatus as described in claim 7, wherein each of said second slots is essentially angled and has a first portion which extends into said second wall and also has a second portion which is angled relative to said first portion and

which is continuous of said first portion and which is disposed downwardly.

9. (Pending) A separable container apparatus as described in claim 8, wherein each said second flange member includes a first portion extending outwardly generally perpendicular of a respective said second side wall, and also includes a second portion being integrally attached to said first portion and being angled relative to said first portion and being disposed upwardly.

10. (Amended) A separable container apparatus as described in claim [9] 1, wherein said lids include a first lid which is adapted to detachably [fastened] fasten to all of said containers being attached to one another, and also includes a second lid which is adapted to detachably fasten to two of said containers being attached to one another, and further includes a third lid which is adapted to detachably fasten to one of said containers.

11. (Amended) A separable container apparatus as described in claim 10, wherein [said containers are detachably attached to one another to essentially form a cylindrical structure having said multiple compartments therein with] said first lid [being] is circular shaped and fastenable about top edges of said third side walls to close upon said open tops of said containers.

12. (Amended) A separable container apparatus as described in claim [11] 1, wherein each of said containers essentially represents 1/3 of said cylindrical structure.

13. (Amended) A separable container apparatus as described in claim [12] 1, wherein two of said containers are detachably

attached to one another to essentially form 2/3 of said cylindrical structure with said second lid having a plurality of edges and being adapted to fasten about said top edges of said third side walls of the two of said containers and about said top edge of said first side wall of one of said containers and about said top edge of said second side wall of the other of said containers, said edges of said second lid including a curved first edge, a straight second edge, and a straight third edge which is angled more than 90 degrees and less than 180 degrees relative to said second edge thereof.

14. (Amended) A separable container apparatus as described in claim [13] 2, wherein said third lid has a plurality of edges and is adapted to fasten about said top edges of said first, second, and third side walls of one of said containers, said edges of said third lid including a curved first edge, a straight second edge, and a straight third edge which is angled more than 180 degrees and less than 270 degrees relative to said second edge thereof.

15. (Amended) A separable container apparatus as described in claim [14] 2, wherein said third side walls are essentially curved, and said first and second side walls are essentially planar.

16. (Pending) A separable container apparatus comprising:  
containers each having an open top, a bottom wall, and a peripheral side wall assembly securely attached to and extending upwardly from said bottom wall, said containers being detachably connected to one another to essentially form a single structure having a plurality of storage compartments, said peripheral side wall assembly of each said container including a first side wall, a second side wall, and a third side wall, each of said first and second side walls having a top edge and a bottom edge, said first and

second side walls of one of said containers being detachably attached to said first and second side walls of the others of said containers, said first side wall of one said container being detachably attached to said second side wall of another said container, each of said containers including an elongate first flange member securely attached to an exterior of said first side wall and extending along a length of said top edge thereof, and also including a first recessed portion disposed in said first side wall and extending along a length of said bottom edge thereof, and further including a first slot disposed in said first recessed portion and extending the length of said bottom edge, each said elongate first flange member including a first portion extending outwardly generally perpendicular of a respective said first side wall, and also including a second portion being integrally attached to said first portion and being angled relative to said first portion and being disposed downwardly, each of said containers further including a second slot disposed in an exterior of said second wall and extending along a length of said top edge thereof and being adapted to receive said first flange member of another said container, and also including an elongate second flange member being securely attached to an exterior of said second side wall and extending outwardly and along a length of said bottom edge thereof and being adapted to be received in said first recessed portion and said first slot of another said container, each of said second slots being essentially angled and having a first portion which extends into said second wall and also having a second portion which is angled relative to said first portion and which is continuous of said first portion and which is disposed downwardly, each said second flange member including a first portion extending outwardly generally perpendicular of a respective said second side wall, and also including a second portion being integrally attached to said first

portion and being angled relative to said first portion and being disposed upwardly; and

lids being removably attached to any combination of attached said containers; said lids including a first lid which is adapted to detachably fastened to all of said containers being attached to one another, and also including a second lid which is adapted to detachably fasten to two of said containers being attached to one another, and further including a third lid which is adapted to detachably fasten to one of said containers, said containers being detachably attached to one another to essentially form a cylindrical structure having said multiple compartments therein with said first lid being circular shaped and fastenable about top edges of said third side walls to close upon said open tops of said containers, each of said containers essentially representing  $1/3$  of said cylindrical structure, two of said containers being detachably attached to one another to essentially form  $2/3$  of said cylindrical structure with said second lid having a plurality of edges and being adapted to fasten about said top edges of said third side walls of the two of said containers and about said top edge of said first side wall of one of said containers and about said top edge of said second side wall of the other of said containers, said edges of said second lid including a curved first edge, a straight second edge, and a straight third edge which is angled more than 90 degrees and less than 180 degrees relative to said second edge thereof, said third lid having a plurality of edges and being adapted to fasten about said top edges of said first, second, and third side walls of one of said containers, said edges of said third lid including a curved first edge, a straight second edge, and a straight third edge which is angled more than 180 degrees and less than 270 degrees relative to said second edge thereof, said third side walls being essentially curved, and said first and second side walls being essentially planar, said lids further



having lips extending outwardly from one or more of said edges for opening and removing said lids from said containers.

**Please add the following claim(s):**

17. (Added) A separable container apparatus comprising:  
containers each having an open top, a bottom wall, and a peripheral side wall assembly securely attached to and extending upwardly from said bottom wall, said containers being detachably connected to one another to essentially form a single structure having a plurality of storage compartments, said peripheral side wall assembly of each said container including a first side wall, a second side wall, and a third side wall, each of said first and second side walls having a top edge and a bottom edge, said first and second side walls of one of said containers being detachably attached to said first and second side walls of the others of said containers, said first side wall of one said container being detachably attached to said second side wall of another said container, each of said containers including an elongate first flange member securely attached to an exterior of said first side wall and extending along a length of said top edge thereof, and also including a first recessed portion disposed in said first side wall and extending along a length of said bottom edge thereof, and further including a first slot disposed in said first recessed portion and extending the length of said bottom edge, each said elongate first flange member including a first portion extending outwardly generally perpendicular of a respective said first side wall, and also including a second portion being integrally attached to said first portion and being angled relative to said first portion and being disposed downwardly, each of said containers further including a second slot disposed in an exterior of said second wall and

extending along a length of said top edge thereof and being adapted to receive said first flange member of another said container, and also including an elongate second flange member being securely attached to an exterior of said second side wall and extending outwardly and along a length of said bottom edge thereof and being adapted to be received in said first recessed portion and said first slot of another said container, each of said second slots being essentially angled and having a first portion which extends into said second wall and also having a second portion which is angled relative to said first portion and which is continuous of said first portion and which is disposed downwardly, each said second flange member including a first portion extending outwardly generally perpendicular of a respective said second side wall, and also including a second portion being integrally attached to said first portion and being angled relative to said first portion and being disposed upwardly; and

lids being removably attached to any combination of attached said containers; said lids including a first lid which is adapted to detachably fastened to all of said containers being attached to one another, and also including a second lid which is adapted to detachably fasten to two of said containers being attached to one another, and further including a third lid which is adapted to detachably fasten to one of said containers, said containers being detachably attached to one another to essentially form a cylindrical structure having said multiple compartments therein with said first lid being circular shaped and fastenable about top edges of said third side walls to close upon said open tops of said containers, each of said containers essentially representing a first portion of said cylindrical structure, two of said containers being detachably attached to one another to essentially form a second portion of said cylindrical structure with said second lid having a plurality of edges

and being adapted to fasten about said top edges of said third side walls of the two of said containers and about said top edge of said first side wall of one of said containers and about said top edge of said second side wall of the other of said containers, said edges of said second lid including a curved first edge, a straight second edge, and a straight third edge, said third lid having a plurality of edges and being adapted to fasten about said top edges of said first, second, and third side walls of one of said containers, said edges of said third lid including a curved first edge, a straight second edge, and a straight third edge, said third side walls being essentially curved, and said first and second side walls being essentially planar, said lids further having lips extending outwardly from one or more of said edges for opening and removing said lids from said containers.

### CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, early reconsideration and allowance of this application are most courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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